

House Armed Services Committee

DEMOCRATS

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Ike Skelton, Ranking Member

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Skelton: QDR's Framework Could Require Additional Resources

WASHINGTON, DC – Today Representative Ike Skelton (MO), Ranking Member on the House Armed Services Committee commented on the discrepancy between the missions outlined in the Department of Defense's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and the current level of resources allocated for their successful execution.

Ranking Member Skelton's remarks follow:

"The QDR lays out an ambitious plan to continue extensive commitments in support of the Global War on Terrorism and operations in Iraq while simultaneously being prepared to execute major contingency operations. While this approach appears to provide a solid framework for supporting our national security objectives, it will have no real meaning unless it can be matched with the necessary resources.

"Although it is too early to say for sure, it appears that this QDR places obligations on the military services that may not be supported by our current projected budgets. In particular, I question whether the full range of potential missions detailed in this QDR is possible with an Army that includes only 70 Brigade Combat Teams.

"Today's Army is severely stretched by deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is not clear to me that an Army of 70 BCTs can sustain the "Long War" envisioned by this QDR while simultaneously executing the missions that are necessary to support major conflicts in the future. The Army's land force partner, the Marine Corps, will likewise be severely challenged by the framework laid out in this report.

"Additionally, the QDR proposes to adjust the share of healthcare costs paid by military retirees. I am concerned that this new policy will substantially increase the out-of-pocket costs paid by the hundreds of thousands of brave men and women who made careers out of putting their lives on the line for this nation.

"On the whole, I believe this QDR accurately depicts the challenges facing the Armed Forces and helps to develop many of the capabilities necessary to respond to them. I support the recommendations which call for the expansion of special operations

forces and the improvement of our global strike capabilities. I am particularly pleased to see the Department has committed to improving our relationships with our allies.

“Faced with a limited amount of funding and a QDR that puts forth broad policy themes, we will now be looking to the Department for clear, focused priorities. We will consider their recommendations, as additional details continue to be provided.

“My colleagues and I look will be aggressively reviewing the budget being submitted for fiscal year 2007 to determine whether the QDR rhetoric is truly being matched with the resources necessary for its fulfillment.”

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